

Smokey visits St. Anne's School for Fire Prevention Week



Students at St. Anne's Episcopal School in Middletown got a lesson in wildfire prevention and fire safety from Smokey Bear and Delaware Forest Service education specialist Ashley Melvin as part of the school's new outdoor education programs.

MIDDLETOWN, Del. (October 7, 2020) – Smokey Bear visited St. Anne's Episcopal School to highlight the importance of fire safety and prevention during [National Fire Prevention Week](#), observed from October 4–10, which commemorates the [Great Chicago Fire](#), which burned October 8–10, 1871.

Established in 1944 during World War II, [Smokey Bear](#) is considered the most successful public service campaign in U.S. history – a cooperative effort by the [National Association of State Foresters](#), the [U.S. Forest Service](#), and the [Ad Council](#).

Smokey's timeless message – “Only you can prevent wildfires!” – has more resonance this year, as wildfires have wreaked destruction across many western states: the [National Interagency Fire Center](#) reports that more than 45,000 fires have burned over 7.9 million acres – including 4 million acres in California– a 43 percent increase over 2019. Human-caused fires are often more more destructive: a new study concluded that [96 percent of fires that threaten people's homes are caused by human actions](#) rather than by natural sources such as lightning.

Sponsored by the [Delaware Forest Service](#) under the direction

of education specialist Ashley Melvin, Smokey Bear fire prevention programs focus on the many benefits that trees provide and why it's so important to protect them from the destructive effects of unplanned wildfires. Students learn about Smokey's ABC's of fire – to "Always Be Careful" as well as Smokey's five rules:

1. Only you can prevent wildfires.
2. Always be careful with fire.
3. Never play with matches or lighters.
4. Always watch your campfire.
5. Make sure your campfire is completely out before leaving it.

Each fire prevention program concludes with every student asked to take the "Smokey Pledge" and promise to "never play with matches or lighters and always be careful with fire."

A wealth of information, graphics, and educational materials are available at smokeybear.com

The [Mid-Atlantic Fire Compact](#), of which Delaware is a member, helped to fund a special commemorative [supplement of the popular "Highlights Magazine"](#) for Smokey's 75th Birthday as well as special Smokey Bear coloring pages, including a [special coloring book especially for Delaware](#).

For more information, contact Ashley Melvin at 302-698-4551 or ashley.melvin@delaware.gov